

# EXHIBIT 70

# Trump Has Targeted These Universities. Why?

President Trump has set his sights on defunding colleges, singling out some of the world's wealthiest schools in what critics say is an attack on academic freedom.



**By Alan Blinder**

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The Trump administration is seeking to exert extraordinary influence over American universities by withholding the kind of federal financial support that has flowed to campuses for decades.

President Trump and his allies contend that some schools, especially a handful of elite universities, have become bastions of antisemitism and ideological indoctrination. Though the higher education industry has acknowledged shortcomings and failures, especially since the Hamas attack on Israel in October 2023, it has warned that reducing schools' federal funding could backfire on American society as a whole.

University leaders fear that by threatening to withhold funding, or suspending it with little or no warning, the government is trying to stamp out academic freedom, a cornerstone of the American education system.

The Trump administration has given broad reasons for the cuts, often involving claims that the schools tolerate antisemitism. But the choice of schools it has targeted and even some of its demands have sometimes confused educators and experts. Northwestern University, for example, recently released a lists of steps it

had taken to combat antisemitism that closely tracked with a list of demands the Trump administration had given to Columbia University. Northwestern was targeted several days later, nonetheless.

The issue is revealing the dollars-and-cents consequences of the tensions between campus leaders and the Trump administration. But the outcome of the underlying debate — over the very purpose of higher education — could shape the country for years to come.

## Which schools have been targeted?

So far, seven universities have been singled out for punitive funding cuts or have been explicitly notified that their funding is in serious jeopardy. They are:

- Harvard University, which has approximately \$9 billion at stake. The government has already canceled more than \$2.2 billion in retaliation after Harvard publicly rebuffed the Trump administration's demands.
- Brown University, which the Trump administration said stood to lose \$510 million.
- Columbia, which is hoping to regain about \$400 million in canceled grants and contracts after it bowed to a list of demands from the federal government.
- Cornell University, the target of a cut of at least \$1 billion.
- Northwestern, which Trump administration officials said would be stripped of \$790 million.
- The University of Pennsylvania, which saw \$175 million in federal funding suspended in response to its approach to a transgender athlete's sports participation in 2022.
- Princeton University, which said "dozens" of grants had been suspended. The White House indicated that \$210 million was at risk.

Officials at some of the universities have been puzzled by the cuts, which they have sometimes learned about through social media, and insisted that they had taken action to combat antisemitism.

Dozens of other schools are under also scrutiny, largely by the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, and are aware that some of their federal funding is imperiled. But much of the focus is on 10 schools that have been identified for particular attention by a Trump administration task force that says it is devoted to rooting out antisemitism: Columbia; George Washington University; Harvard; Johns Hopkins University; New York University; Northwestern; the University of California, Berkeley; the University of California, Los Angeles; the University of Minnesota; and the University of Southern California.

Critics of the administration have not hesitated to point out that all of these schools are in states, or, in George Washington's case, a federal district, that voted for the Democratic ticket in 2024.

## **Why are the schools being criticized?**

The administration has frequently claimed that the targeted schools harbor antisemitism. When a protest movement against Israel's war in Gaza swept college campuses around the country in 2024, for example, some of the most volatile scenes unfolded at Columbia.

But the administration's hostility toward major colleges and universities has deeper roots than the turmoil tied to that war alone. Conservatives have looked askance at the elite echelons of higher education for decades, disturbed by affirmative action admissions programs, high tuition costs, the views of liberal professors and the proliferation of diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives on campuses.

Many conservatives say their views have been marginalized in lecture halls, and regard top schools as incubators of so-called wokeness. They have said they want universities to emphasize academic programs that will lead students to the kind of

jobs that are essential to the economy.

A list of Trump administration demands made at Harvard appeared to touch on a variety of conservative complaints with academia, including a lack of diverse political viewpoints among faculty members and a disdain for diversity, equity and inclusion programs.

## **How much money is at stake?**

So far, the government has pulled, or threatened to pull, more than \$12 billion. Most of that money is tied to Harvard and its affiliates, like its hospitals.

Universities have said little about which specific programs were in jeopardy. But Penn, for example, said that researchers in at least seven of its schools were affected.

“These contracts include research on preventing hospital-acquired infections, drug screening against deadly viruses, quantum computing, protections against chemical warfare, and student loan programs,” J. Larry Jameson, Penn’s president, said in an open letter.

## **How have schools responded?**

Beyond statements of frustration and concern, they have generally not done much publicly.

But there are two enormous exceptions. In March, Columbia agreed to comply with demands from the administration so it could enter negotiations over the future of the \$400 million the government had struck. Some of the most important concessions included agreeing to place the university’s Middle Eastern, South Asian and African Studies Department under new oversight; strengthening its campus security force; and toughening its disciplinary and protest policies.

Columbia’s capitulation alarmed higher-education leaders across the country.

On April 14, Harvard tried a different strategy. It rejected proposals from the federal government, including one for the use of an outsider “to audit those programs and departments that most fuel antisemitic harassment or reflect ideological capture.” The government also wanted Harvard to curb the power of its faculty and report international students who committed conduct violations.

Harvard refused, and its president, Alan M. Garber, said that the university “will not surrender its independence or relinquish its constitutional rights.”

To many veterans of academia, Harvard’s choice marked a potential turning point.

Lee C. Bollinger, a former Columbia president, said Harvard’s resistance was “precisely what has been needed.” The university’s pushback, he said, amounted to “a major institution willing to defend the fundamental values at stake, not only with universities but also with other institutions and organizations vital to American democracy.”

## **These schools are rich. Why is the government funding them in the first place?**

Since around the time of World War II, the U.S. government has leaned on academic institutions to conduct research projects whose findings will trickle into the public and private sectors. Federally funded research has almost always had bipartisan support, though there have been occasional complaints (and sometimes outright mockery) surrounding particular projects.

In their scramble to counter the Trump administration’s recent moves, universities have tried to tell elected officials and the public that they make important contributions to the country’s health and prosperity. They have also sought to frame university-based research as imperative to the nation’s future, especially amid China’s rise.

## Can't schools just tap their endowments?

Many big schools do indeed have substantial endowments. Every endowment is different, though, and university leaders note that many donors put restrictions on how their money may be used. Republicans, including Vice President JD Vance, have openly discussed raising the excise tax on the largest endowments.

Harvard has an endowment worth about \$53 billion, far more than any other American university. Even so, a few days after the Trump administration announced a review of Harvard's federal funding, the university announced a plan to issue \$750 million in bonds. Proceeds would give the school, which has been engaged in contingency planning, some financial breathing room.

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